

Food for Thought

April 2011

Asparagus

Harvest of the Month®

Network for a Healthy California



Nutrition Facts

Serving Size:	1/2 cup cooked asparagus (90g)
Calories 20	Calories from Fat 0
	% Daily Value
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 13mg	1%
Total Carbohydrate 4g	1%
Dietary Fiber 2g	7%
Sugars 1g	
Protein 2g	
Vitamin A 18%	Calcium 2%
Vitamin C 12%	Iron 5%

Other nutrients: Vitamin K (57%), Folate (34%), Thiamin (10%), Riboflavin (7%), Potassium (6%), Vitamin E (5%), Niacin (5%)

Source: www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp/search/
NDB No: 11012

Tasting Trio

Awesome Asparagus Appetizer

Serving size- 36 servings

2 Tbs asparagus and black beans

Preparation

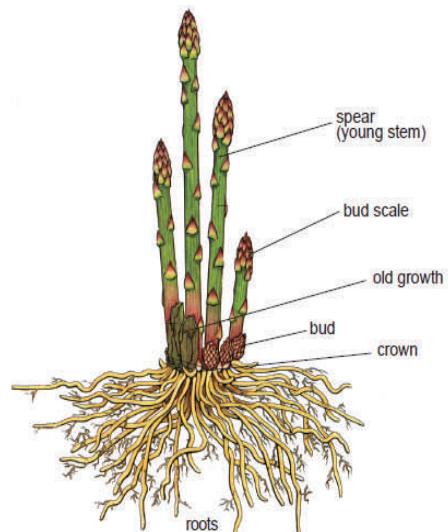
1. Wash asparagus and trim the ends of the asparagus.
2. Drain and rinse the black beans.
3. Cut the asparagus into 1" pieces and place in a large bowl.
4. Add black beans to the bowl.
5. Pour the vinaigrette over the mixture and gently toss until well coated.
6. Serve each student 2 tablespoons of salad.

Source: Network for a Healthy California, Hawthorne Unified School District



Did You Know?

- Asparagus is an excellent source of vitamin K and a good source of vitamin C.
- Asparagus has the highest content of folate of any vegetable per one-half cup serving. Folate helps the body form red blood cells.
- Asparagus is a source of antioxidants which helps prevent cancer and diseases.
- Asparagus requires about three years from the time it is planted to establish permanent roots and produce quality spears. In the right conditions, asparagus can grow about one inch per hour.
- Asparagus cultivation began more than 2,500 years ago by the ancient Greeks and Romans. Early English and Dutch colonists brought asparagus to North America.
- California's geography allows for fresh asparagus to be available from January through September. California is the nation's leading supplier of asparagus, producing nearly half (48%) of the U.S. supply.



Sources: http://www.harvestofthemonth.com/download/Spring/Asparagus/asp_edu_2.pdf
Image adapted from: Stinky and Stringy: Stem & Bulb Vegetables, Meredith Sayles Hughes, 1999.

Curriculum Ideas

History:

- Research the early beginnings of the California asparagus industry. Who were the first to grow it? Why did they grow more green versus white?



Science:

Welcome the birds: Birds help pollinate plants, eat insects and add beauty to the garden. Providing food, shelter, water or nesting materials will engage students and encourage birds to visit your school garden.

- Younger students can build bird houses.
- Older students can track and identify bird species that visit

Physical Activity Corner National Garden Month

Objective: Gardening is a great way for students to be active, practice and understand science lessons, and learn valuable life skills. Gardening uses all of the major muscle groups, increases flexibility, and helps strengthen joints.



Warm up- Stretch for at least 5 minutes to keep muscles flexible and help prevent injury while gardening.

Mix it up- Rotate every 15 to 20 minutes between gardening tasks like raking, weeding, pruning and digging.



Cool down- End the gardening session by allowing students to reflect on what they created and maintained. Students can write in journals, pick flowers, harvest crops, and graph growth of fruits and vegetables.

April Events

Health and Learning

Studies show that students who eat more fruits and vegetables and get at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day perform better on standardized tests.



Asparagus Resources & More

Harvest of the Month teacher materials: http://www.harvestofthemonth.com/download/Spring/Asparagus/asp_edu_2.pdf

Fruits & Veggies Matter:

www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/?page_id=197

California Asparagus Commission:

<http://www.calasparagus.com>

Gardening: <http://www.nationalgargeningmonth.org>

How Groundhog's Garden Grew by Lynn Cherry

Bugs! Bugs! Bugs! by Bob Barner

Good Bugs for Your Garden by Allison Starcher



What's in the Name?

Pronunciation: *ə-spär'ə-gəs*

Spanish name: *espárrago*

Family: Liliaceae

Genus: *Asparagus*

Species: *A. officinalis*

A perennial member of the Lily family, asparagus is also related to onions, leeks and garlic. Its name was derived from the Greek word *aspharagos* meaning “sprout” or “shoot.”

Asparagus can be harvested in three different colors: green, white and purple. White asparagus is grown by burying the crowns under a foot of soil preventing photosynthesis. Purple asparagus spears turn green when cooked.

Source: http://www.harvestofthemonth.com/download/Spring/Asparagus/asp_edu_2.pdf



Network for a Healthy California-Monrovia Unified School District
1831 Santa Fe Place
Monrovia, CA 91016
626.471.2776
FAX 626.471.2088